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RAINFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



ANNUAL
REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

1944

S. C. GAWNE, M.D., B.S. (Lond.), M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.C.H., D.P.H.,
Medical Officer of Health.

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RAINFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL, 1944.

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Vice-Chairman of the Council : G. T. Berryman, Esq.

Chairman of the Health and Housing Committee :
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Sanitary Inspector :

Reginald C. Haycock, A.R.S.I., A.M.Inst. B.E., A.M.Inst.H.E.

COUNCIL OFFICES,
RAINFORD.

March, 1945.

To the Chairman and Members of the Rainford Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit to you the 54th Annual Report on the health of Rainford, being the Report for the year ended 31st December, 1944.

In conformance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health the Report is drawn up in an abbreviated form. Statistical matters are not included in detail, but records are being carefully preserved so that after the cessation of hostilities a full survey can be made covering the war period.

Of the seven years during which I have had the honour to serve as your Medical Officer, five have been war years, and consequently the period has not been one of great developments in the public health services. One would have wished to see considerable improvements in Housing, for example. Some of the older houses in the district have completed their period of usefulness and have fallen into a state of disrepair which precludes their renovation at a reasonable cost ; others are lacking in many essentials so that repairs and adaptations are badly needed.

In one respect the war has not impeded progress, namely, in the campaign against diphtheria. The scheme for free immunisation has proved most successful and the district has achieved the distinction of having the highest immunisation rate in the County. The beneficial effects of this work in Rainford are evidenced by the pronounced reduction in the incidence of the disease since the inception of the scheme. In 1944 not a single case of diphtheria occurred in the district.

It might well have been expected that the stress and strain of five years of war with food rationing and other privations would have been reflected in an increase in the amount of sickness and ill-health. The evidence available goes to show that the general health of the District has been maintained at a high level, and from the findings at the medical inspections of children at school and elsewhere, there is no indication that there has been any deterioration in the nutrition of the growing child.

My final words as your Medical Officer of Health, which office I relinquished on the 31st December, 1944, are an expression of my grateful appreciation of the courtesy and consideration extended to me at all times by the Members of the Urban District Council, and my cordial thanks to the Officials of the Council for their help and co-operation.

My thanks are also due to Miss Ellerington for her valuable assistance. Though outside the scope of her duties as a member of the County Staff, she has at all times given freely of her help in the work arising in the Health Department and in the preparation of Reports.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

S. C. GAWNE,

Medical Officer of Health.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (acres)	5,877
Estimated population	3,437
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1940) according to Rate Books	1,063
Rateable Value	£16,444
Product of a penny rate	£68 10 4

I.—PHYSICAL FEATURES AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

There has been no change in the boundaries of the district during the year. An account of the physical features and social conditions of the district will be found in earlier reports.

II.—VITAL STATISTICS.

71 births occurred during 1944. This was an increase of 7 on the previous year. The year was noteworthy in that there was a great preponderance of male births, there being 45 male births and 26 female. There were 5 illegitimate births.

The number of civilian deaths assigned to Rainford for the year was 41.

The following table gives the figures appertaining to births and deaths for the year 1939 to date.

Year	Live Births	Birth rate per 1,000 estimated resident population	Deaths	Death rate per 1,000 estimated average population
1939	56	15.1	50	13.4
1940	50	13.7	45	12.3
1941	48	12.9	42	11.3
1942	58	15.6	40	10.8
1943	64	17.8	54	15.0
1944	71	20.7	41	11.9

Infantile Death Rate.

In 1944 the deaths of infants under one year of age numbered 4. For comparison the figures for the preceding five years are as follows :—

Number of deaths under 1 year.

1939	2	1942	1
1940	2	1943	6
1941	4		

III.—GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

There have been no changes in the General Health Services during the year, and particulars of the various services will be found in my Report for 1940.

The Child Welfare Centre continues to be much appreciated by mothers in Rainford. The following is a record of attendances made during the year. The figures for the preceding year are given in parenthesis.

Number of Attendances by Children.

Under 1 year of age	1,262	(811)
From 1-2 years of age	181	(128)
Over 2 years of age	120	(114)

It will be seen that attendances for 1944 are as much as 50% more than those for 1943. It is impossible to overstress the importance of this work. The nurture of the child in its first year is the key to a healthy and vigorous life.

IV.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water.

Water is obtained from the St. Helens Corporation by agreement, and the supply is satisfactory.

All the houses in Rainford are supplied from the mains with the exception of seven supplied by wells and one from a spring. Five of the latter houses can be supplied from the mains, should the private supply prove to be unsatisfactory.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.

A full account of the sewerage systems in Rainford will be found in the Annual Report for 1937.

The refuse tip at Ormskirk Road has been temporarily closed, and the Football Pitch on the Silver Jubilee Recreation Ground is now being used in order to level the ground.

Closet Accommodation.

I would again call the attention of the Council to the outstanding need for the abolition of the privy middens remaining in the sewered area of the District. This antiquated method of sanitation should not be tolerated in any modern community. In addition to facilitating the spread of dysentery and other intestinal infections, such systems are offensive and not conducive to pride in the home.

Public Cleansing.

No alteration in the system of public cleansing has taken place during the year. Full details were given in the reports for previous years.

Salvage.

The following are the amounts of the various types of Salvage disposed of during the year ended 31st December, 1944.

Waste Paper	29 tons, 16 cwts.
Scrap Metal	4 tons, 7 cwts.
Rags	6 cwts.
Bones	1 cwt.

Total gross income from same £134 4s. 8d.

Shops.

The Shops Act, 1934, is enforced by the County Council. The provisions of the Act, however, relating to the ventilation and temperature of shops and to sanitary conveniences are administered by the Urban District Council. It has not been necessary to take any action during the year.

V.—SCHOOLS.

The school children in the Rainford Urban District are inspected by the School Medical Department of the Lancashire County Council, who make all necessary arrangements for the treatment and following up of defects. A School Clinic has been established at the Council Offices, Rainford, where children requiring treatment for minor ailments may be brought for treatment. The Clinic also serves as a Centre for the continued observation of children requiring medical or nursing supervision.

Close co-operation exists between the Medical Officer and the teachers, and much use is made of the returns of sick children forwarded by the School Attendance Officer each week.

Exclusion of scholars is carried out in accordance with the Board of Education's memorandum issued in 1942. Copies have been sent to medical practitioners. It is hoped that the adoption of these recommendations will secure a uniformity of procedure in the case of exclusion of scholars from school.

School Closure.

It was not found necessary to close any of the schools during the year.

School Feeding.

A Feeding Centre has been set up in Alfred Street from which dinners are supplied to all the schools in the District, and there is no doubt that these will have a beneficial effect upon the nutrition and well-being of the children. Many of the children attending Rainford schools come from a distance, and the provision of a hot substantial meal each day will be particularly valuable in the winter months.

Milk is provided by the Lancashire County Council Education Committee to children in the schools in necessitous cases, under the Milk Marketing Board's scheme.

Samples of milk delivered to each school are taken quarterly for pathological examination for tuberculosis. The samples in 1944 all proved satisfactory.

Cleanliness.

Reference was made in the Report for 1941 to the incidence of verminous infestation in school children. Cleanliness inspections still constitute an important part of the work of the School Nurse and vigorous action is taken where infestation is found.

VI.—HOUSING.

No changes have taken place with regard to housing since my last Report.

Since the outbreak of hostilities, it has not been possible to carry out the normal routine inspection of houses in the District. The staff available in normal times was limited, and extra duties, such as A.R.P., have prohibited such inspections.

VII.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply.

Much time and attention is devoted to this important subject with a view to providing and maintaining a pure and safe milk supply. The Government have effected far-reaching changes whereby the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are made responsible for the enforcement of conditions relating to clean milk production at the dairy farms.

I have always been of the opinion that no dirty milk need be put upon the market if reasonable care is exercised on the part of the producer, and that milk of a high standard could and should be produced by every milk farmer.

On the 31st December, 1944, there were registered under the Milk and Dairies (Amendment) Act, 1922, and the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926 :

- 5 persons as cowkeepers and wholesale purveyors of milk ;
- 13 persons as cowkeepers and retail purveyors of milk ;
- 2 persons as purveyors of milk.

The approximate number of cows in the District is 150.

Meat and Other Foods.

Slaughter Houses and Meat Inspection : There were no slaughter houses in operation in the District during the year.

VIII.—FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT, 1901 AND FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

No change has occurred in the number of factories and workshops within the district since last year.

IX.—INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

During 1944 the total number of notifications of infectious disease received in the department was 34. This is less than half the number received last year and the decrease is accounted for by a lower incidence in measles and whooping cough.

Hospital accommodation is provided at Ormskirk by arrangement with the Ormskirk Urban District Council and is adequate.

Scarlet Fever.

5 cases of scarlet fever were notified during the year. The cases were mild in type ; indeed scarlet fever has become so benign that removal to hospital is not usually indicated or to be desired. Cross infection, the cause of most of the complications of scarlet fever, is eliminated if the patient is nursed at home. Hospital treatment should be reserved for severe cases requiring skilled nursing and those cases occurring in a household, a member of which is a food handler or a woman approaching confinement.

Whooping Cough.

This serious disease was in evidence in the earlier part of the year—10 children were notified to be suffering from the disease, 4 of whom were under 5 years of age. It is in the young child that whooping cough is both dangerous and liable to produce complications. Many of the lung complaints of later life owe their origin to an attack of whooping cough in childhood, and it is essential that parents should realise the importance of careful nursing and treatment in this infection. Unfortunately no satisfactory means of preventing whooping cough has yet been found, and reliance must be placed upon measures to secure the exclusion of young children from known sources of infection and from public places in time of epidemic. It is important in this respect that the susceptibility of young babies to the disease should be appreciated.

Measles.

Notifications of measles were received in the latter part of the year. A total of 18 cases occurred and the age incidence can be seen in the table given below.

Diphtheria.

It is most pleasing to report that no cases of diphtheria occurred in the Urban District in 1944. There can be little doubt that this very satisfactory state is attributable to the successful immunisation campaign. A high proportion, probably over 90%, of the children have now received a course of treatment against diphtheria. Apart from the elimination of much sickness and suffering, immunisation is a sound policy economically.

It is important that the drive to secure the immunisation of all children should not be relaxed.

Treatment of Diphtheria.

A supply of diphtheria antitoxin is readily available for use in the event of an outbreak of diphtheria. The antitoxin is provided free of charge and is kept by the Medical Practitioners in the District.

The following is a table of notifications of infectious disease received during the year.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS) DURING THE YEAR 1944.

Disease	Total cases at all ages	Under 1 year	1	2	3	4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 64	65 & Over
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	5	—	—	—	—	1	3	—	—	—	1	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Enteric Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	18	—	—	3	2	2	9	2	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	10	1	2	—	—	1	6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	34	1	2	3	2	4	18	2	—	—	2	—	—

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

During the year 1944, the number of children immunised for the first time was 53. In addition to this, 20 were given a second protective course of immunisation on entering school life. This practice is in accord with recent medical research, which shows that the degree of immunisation achieved by treatment in infancy is greatly enhanced by a second injection of 0.5 c.c. of antigen, given when the child is about five years of age. This is the time when the child enters school life and meets a new community.

A very high proportion of the children living in Rainford have now been immunised. Special attention is directed towards securing the treatment of the young child, as it is amongst infants that diphtheria takes its greatest toll.

Most parents are well familiar with the Council's Scheme and are anxious to avail themselves of the facilities provided.

As soon as an infant in the Urban District attains 1 year, the mother is invited to bring it for treatment to the Child Welfare Centre.

In this work Dr. S. N. Wright, of the County Staff, rendered valuable assistance. The County Health Visitor, Miss Melia, gave freely of her time, and her co-operation was essential and valuable. Upon Miss T. M. Ellerington fell the responsibility for making appointments and keeping records.

The Tables given below show the number of children who have been immunised since the Council's Scheme for the free immunisation against diphtheria was put into operation in November, 1938.

	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	Total
Under 1 year		1	2	3	1	Nil	Nil	under 5 years at end of 1944
1 year	2	14	9	36	41	38	43	
2 years	5	11	11	22	17	6	1	
3 years	10	5	4	9	9	4	3	
4 years	12	7	11	15	13	9	1	293
5 years	21	13	4	11	8	7	1	
6 years	31	13	4	11	11	8	2	Between 5 & 9
7 years	24	9	5	5	5	10	—	
8 years	25	5	5	2	1	6	—	
9 years	28	11	2	3	1	5	—	236
10 years	35	6	5	6	—	8	2	
11 years	27	4	2	6	—	4	—	Between 10 & 14
12 years	29	3	2	2	—	1	—	
13 years	21	3	2	1	—	1	—	230
14 years	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	
15 years and over	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	15 yrs. & over 88
	272	105	68	134	107	108	53	847

Alum precipitated toxoid supplied by the Ministry of Health is the standard immunising agent used. Two doses are given subcutaneously into the upper arm, an interval of at least four weeks intervening between the two. The first injection amounts to 0.2 c.c. and the second to 0.5 c.c.

It is most unusual for any reactions to occur in children under 8 years of age. Over this age slight local reactions have occasionally been noticed after the first "detector" dose of 0.2 c.c., and in these cases immunisation treatment is completed with Toxoid Antitoxin Floccules. It is exceptional for any reaction to occur after T.A.F.

Immunity is acquired some 2 or 3 months after the last injection.

Immunising material supplied free of cost to practitioners in the district upon request.

Tuberculosis.

The following table gives the numbers of new cases of both forms of the disease, together with the deaths therefrom. The figures include all primary cases and other cases coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health.

Age Periods	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Resp. M.	F.	Non-Resp. M.	F.	Resp. M.	F.	Non-Resp. M.	F.
Years								
0—1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—10	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
10—15	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
15—20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20—25	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
25—35	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
35—45	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
45—55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	1	1	2	1	1	1	—	—

The Scheme for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis in the administrative county is in the hands of the Lancashire County Council, who provide dispensaries, sanatoria and home visiting.

The Dispensary for Tuberculosis patients in the Rainford District is in Hardshaw Street, St. Helens.

Full co-operation exists with the Tuberculosis Officer covering the Rainford area.

Notification of tuberculosis was found to be complete and satisfactory during 1944.



